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Christmas Eve feast, Easter festivities, and the ceremonies on St. George's Day.

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Roughly two-thirds of adult Dragalevtsy was in Sofia on an average Friday. On Thursday evenings the village was already bubbling with excitement. The wagons had already been loaded. All that was necessary in the dim light on Friday morning was the yoking of the sleepy oxen. Soon cart after cart would creak heavily down from the village, overtaking those peasants who cheerfully made the long trip by foot. By the time sleepy city-dwellers were breakfasting, the village was well on its way to the outside world.

Once in Sofia there were four possible destinations for the peasant wagon: the cattle market, the mill, the big curb market, or the *Bezisten Pazar* (another smaller market).

The cattle market was located across the city, back of the railroad station, near the municipal cemetery. This market was owned and managed by the municipality. Every peasant before passing into the enclosure with a beast had to pay the tax of ten leva. The sun had already grown warm by the time the Dragalevtsy peasant and his wife passed through side streets to this square, packed with bargaining, shouting men and noisy animals. Usually the women sat outside the square in their wagons loaded with pumpkins and peppers in season, though once in a while a woman accompanied her husband through the bargaining and sale of the animal. The bright blue uniforms of the police were very much in evidence in this dusty confusion, where hard bargains sometimes led to fist fights. At the east end, gypsies raced their not too spirited horses up and down to prove to would-be purchasers the absence of defects. At the northeast side, the red-eyed water buffaloes and their dirty little black calves moved restlessly because of biting flies. To the northwest, along the iron rail the oxen ruminated.

Through the tumult and dust wandered the sellers of *boza* (fermented millet drink) and the vendors of round *gevretsi* (small rings of bread); here a man was eating a melon near a sucking calf. I was always interested in those performing *pazarluk*, which was the method of clinching a bargain. The buyer and the seller of an animal would stand shaking hands as the seller demanded an unreasonably high

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price, to which the buyer retorted with a ridiculously low price. As the two amounts approached each other the handshaking grew warmer and more rapid until finally the buyer and seller agreed on a sensible figure, at which time a third party added his hand to those of the other two. The third peasant, the witness of the sale, often enjoyed shouting as much as the principals. The bargain concluded, the men went to arrange a bill of sale, after which the newly purchased animal was led across the plain to its new home.

At this market in 1937 a sound young bull cost between twenty-five and thirty-five dollars; a fresh buffalo cow, between fifty and sixty dollars; ordinary cows brought slightly less, between thirty-five and forty-five dollars. Horses ranged from twelve to sixty dollars, while the humble donkey varied in value from twelve to eighteen dollars.

Not far away from the big cattle market, in the high-walled enclosure, was the sheep bazaar. There shepherds lolled in the shade with their flocks and waited for purchasers, often long in coming. This too was a municipal bazaar, and the peasants paid a small fee for the privilege of carrying on business there. Ordinarily a pair of sheep cost $3.60.

Near the Bridge of Lions spanning the narrow canal around Sofia was the mill which the people of Dragalevtsy had chosen to patronize. If they were tired out after their trip into the city, the villagers lay down on sacks of grain until their turns came. When at last they aroused themselves they were coated with a thin layer of flour dust which filled the air around the electrically operated machinery. In the mill courtyard the unyoked oxen rested beside the wagons, and chatting groups of women sat in the scanty shade.

From the Bridge of Lions there jutted off a narrow street lined with people displaying homegrown and homemade wares. This was the beginning of the general market which extended with innumerable side-street ramifications for several long blocks. This market did not really get into full swing until nine o'clock, owing to the drowsiness of Sofia housewives.

The real life of this market resided not so much in the great variety of products on sale as in the peasants: their dress, their immeasurable patience, and their childlike curiosity at strange things

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such as a tourist's knickers or the cheap gay contents of the toy-sellers' pushcarts.

Each woman had something to sell: a few eggs, some blueberries picked up on the mountain, two or three chickens, a bag of peppers, strong-smelling buffalo butter, a bunch of carnations, white beans for which Dragalevtsy was especially known throughout this region, or a few walnuts. The woman's merchandise, piled on the sidewalk before her, was her excuse for coming to town.

It was around the next destination, the *Bezistén Pazar*, that fondest memories clung, because this was the spot near the Sofia flower bazaar where young people from surrounding villages went upon completing their morning duties in town. It was here that young men from one village met girls from other villages. During the afternoon, brightly dressed, giggling young couples promenaded in the sunshine while the older people, especially the men, gathered in the *"Dulgata Mehana,"* the tavern to which Dragalevtsy peasants were especially loyal. They lunched and drank, rested, and swapped their stories here. Nor was it without pride that they told how the late Fiodor Chaliapin, the celebrated opera singer, in 1934 spent a very merry evening in this same *"Dulgata Mehana."*

This weekly trip to town on Friday did surprisingly little to introduce changes to the village. Even while in the capital city, the peasants still lived in a peasant world. In the animal bazaar, for instance, there was little social conversation and little opportunity for a villager to widen his knowledge of urban life. Too often in this place he learned to distrust the city-dwellers through frequent dealings with the keen-witted, professional cattle merchant. In the mill he was still in a peasant world even though noisy machines foreign to his village ran at lightning speed. It was true that in the general market all types of Sofia citizenry passed in review, but the peasants' chief contact here was with the servant girls accompanying the housewives on the Friday shopping expedition. Even after finishing their little business in the general market, the village men and women found most enjoyment in being with other peasants. Few people of Dragalevtsy ventured on the city's main streets; even if they should have happened into a movie house, it would have been one on some

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369 443 back street. I do know that the inarticulate peasant woman who sat for hours crouched on the sidewalk wondered at the strange styles of women's clothing, and that the village man, in his wandering, coveted some glittering object in a shopwindow for his child. In the late afternoon as they went home, and during the days that followed, man and wife talked about this trip to market. For them it had been a shared adventure.

527 Other activities which the family members shared besides the tasks of home and field and the trip to market were the holidays. The traditional holidays were religious, while the ones most recently introduced were patriotic.

796 January sixth was *Malka Koleda,* or Little Christmas. Many Bulgarian villagers would tell you that Christ was really born on the day before Christmas, but his birth was not made known until the following day. For that reason, great emphasis was laid upon the celebration of Little Christmas, or Christmas Eve, with the meal on Christmas Eve as the most important part of the season's festivities.

[609] Each time I spent Christmas in a Bulgarian village home I was deeply impressed with the simplicity and beauty of its symbolism. I was a foreigner and a Protestant nonbeliever. Bai Milush and his family received me as though I were one of their own large family. Carefully and patiently they explained to me each bit of ceremony and tradition and symbolism. Often a ceremony was repeated so I could photograph it. There was not a single appurtenance of the Western Christmas in the household; even the date was different, but the Christmas spirit meant more there than anywhere else I had ever been.

To commemorate Christ's birth in a manger, straw was laid on the floor and covered with a blanket which served as the tablecloth for the evening's repast. The whole family gathered around this blanket after an incense urn had been carried as a good luck symbol from the iconostas to each room of the house and to all of the animal stalls. Because the meal was late in starting, three of the smallest children had gone to sleep, one in a crib and the other two on a wooden bed. In order to get the meal under way without further formalities, the women passed hot, fiery *rakiya* (plum brandy) to each person and stood patiently until the single glass had been emptied

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Cattle market: The cattle market and the sheep market, located not far away, lie on the other side of Sofia from Dragalevtsy, back of the railroad station toward the municipal cemetery. It is there a peasant goes if he wishes to dispose of, or purchase, an animal. At this market a nice young bull costs $25-$30, a fresh buffalo cow, $50-$60; ordinary milch cows, $35-$45; horses, $12-$60; donkeys, $12-$18. In the sheep market a pair of sheep sell for $3.60. The cattle market is a colorful place. There is much excitement in the horse section where gypsies ride their not-so-fiery steeds up and down to show how sound they are. But the peasant does little visiting with others in the market; he is not the kind to strike up an acquaintance with just anyone. He does deal with the nimble-witted cattle-buyers whose crafty ways stand for city ways in the peasant's undiscerning judgment. In other words, the peasant's contact with "the outside world" in the cattle market helps build up a psychological barrier against the city since the peasant seldom leaves feeling that he has made a good bargain, unless he has concluded a trade with another peasant more rustic than himself.

The mill: A second place the peasant is likely to visit is the mill, not far away from the general curb market. In spite of the fact that there are many mills in Sofia the people of Dragalevtsy have chosen this as their favorite one, with another ranking as second choice. If they are tired out after their trip to the mill, the villagers lie down on sacks of grain until their turns come; if not sleepy, the peasants form talkative groups near their unyoked animals in the mill courtyard. But here again we find peasant talking with peasant, much of the conversation condemning the modern times, some government policy, or the sad effects of the World War. A talk with a conservative peasant from another village merely heightens the conservatism in the Dragalevtsy peasant.

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Curb market: After finishing at the mill the peasant will perhaps go to the General Curb Market where his wife, squatted on the sidewalk, has been crying her wares for hours in the hope of selling a few bunches of vegetables or several "pairs" of eggs. She has seen many enticing objects in the vendors' pushcarts, observed the styles* worn by city housewives accompanied by peasant servant girls, the strut of the military, the bizarre appearance of a foreign tourist in knickers taking pictures of the scene. She must also have talked to other peasant women who, like herself, return to a favorite spot week after week. But the question arises: Do all the men usually take their wives along? Is it usually a family affair, this trip to market? The answer is that between fifty and sixty per cent of the female heads go to Sofia on a typical market day; fifteen per cent never go at all.

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*The chief tailor in Dragalevtsy says that styles in dress reach the peasants from other villages. The women, for instance, imitate what a peasant from another village wears, but not what a city woman wears.